

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #115!

Greetings, lover of all that is good and true in pro wrestling. You know the tip we've been keeping it on and this time out we're even deeper in the ilk. Phil brings the blood and barbed-wire with the latest prized Big Japan Honma/Yamakawa bloodbath, Rippa brings the Euro-Indie-Trash, Fat Tony goes on about our Wrestler of the week- the beloved Midnight Express, and I continue my journey into the Dramatic Dream. Naimark pipes in with the fat ass review SANS HOT BRAZILLIAN BABES(!) of Vale Tudo 1996 and Pete and Ray are working themselves to death this week. Moisten your lips and plant a big one on RIPPPPEEEEEEEERRRRRRR!!!

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\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ UWA "Wrestling Rampage" - September 1999

(PHIL RIPPA)

This follow up to Schneider's review of this already cancelled English TV program. This is supposed to be the month before the shows that Phil reviewed but UWA is all about fucking with chronological order so things are all messed up. Hey, it's like a true U.S. indy. To Hell with continuity, I say.

SHOW ONE

Big Pappa T vs. Frank/Unknown Soldier:

Big Pappa T brings the hot valet and nothing else. His contribution to this federation is his S&M outfit and his weird shuck and jive dance step that he performs more times than Mark Lawrence ever said "Modern Day Warrior". Frank is supposedly an old Army buddy of T and he claims that this T is not the real T. He is going to unmask him and prove to the world that he is a fake. The match turns into a handicap match for no other reason than Frank, who does Bischoffian level karate kicks, is WORSE than Big Pappa T- so the Unknown Soldier is in to shoulder the load. Fine with me as the Soldier proves that he is willing to die. He is all about the highspot. An over the corner tope con hilo. A missile dropkick. A jumping headscissor takeover. Hey, all he needs to learn now is psychology. And transitions. And selling. And how to apply a headlock. Lean on the fast forward. T wins. Frank is never heard from again.

Mad Dog MacPhie vs. Leon Murphy:

Mad Dog is soooooo the guy who rotates the chips at your local convenient store while Murphy, who delivered the classic "I'm not a pretty man" speech, isn't very good with the wrestling skills. The thing about this match is that someone forgot to tell Murphy that wrestling was fake as he pummels MacPhie with some UFC style strikes. It is also fairly obvious that Murphy is on the Mark Shrader condition plan, for he is blown up after two minutes. Unfortunately for we the viewers, the match is a lot longer than that. Next.

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Sometime during this show, they have a pre-taped segment with the senior official. This guy looks like he walked straight off the set of Thunderbirds. Anyway, he explains some rules regarding the upcoming matches. He pops up a couple more times during the next few shows.

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Stevie Knight vs. Flash Barker:

Sports Entertainment moment. Knight is supposed to defend his TV title against 100% British Beef Danny Royal. Knight refuses and instead claims he has found a better opponent, Flash Barker. Barker is of course a fat slob who waddles into the ring and loses in about 30 seconds. In fact, he was defeated with a snapmare- which is sad in and of its self. Well, Royal still wants a match. Knight claims that he has already defended his title as mandated in his contract. Blah, blah, blah. Long story short. They agree on a non-title match.

Stevie Knight vs. Danny Royal:

Stevie Knight is one of the quality workers in this fed. Royal is master of the 100% tiny pants. Plus, he isn't very good. Knight tries to corral in Royal but not much comes of it and, since this is a non-title, we already know what the outcome is going to be. (If you don't, then you really haven't been watching that much wrestling. Good for you having a life.) Royal goes over with possibly the sorriest looking full-nelson slam- called a "Beef Bomb"- ever to be performed in a ring.

SHOW TWO

Flash Barker vs. Kerry Cabrero - British Bouncer Match:

These two have issues and since there hasn't been a decisive winner yet, this match was booked. The idea of a British Bouncer Match is that works like a reverse Lumberjack match (keep guys from interfering instead of running away.) Each wrestler selected two wrestlers with the condition that the bouncers couldn't be Stevie Knight or Phil Powers. Barker, because he is an idiot, selects Big Pappa T and Danny Royal while Cabrero, because he too is an idiot, picks Mad Dog MacPhie and Drew MacDonald. If you ignore the usual nonsense that applies to a lumberjack match, this affair is actually quite passable. Barker proves that he watches a lot of WWF tapes. He does Shamrock's ankle lock, the crippler crossface, the bronco buster and his finisher is the Michinoku Driver (which actually is fairly good looking). Cabrero is a good little heel and he breaks out the dickish dropkick to the testicles in this match so I got no problem with him. Barker goes over clean which was kinda surprising since it seemed that this match was destined to be a big screw job. No complaints.

Jodie Fleish vs. Paul Terrell:

This is probably the best match of the entire three shows. Terrell is one half of the tag champs, Too Far Gone. Flash is the reason we get these shows. I dig the Doc Chan signs in the crowd. Terrell is a decent little worker and- as per usual- Fleish tries to cripple himself by over-rotating on everything. Cool moment as Fleish busts out the off the wall moonsault to a big pop. Fleish manages to pull off a Shiryu roll while Terrell is all about powerbombing Jody is as many possible ways. Terrell pulls Fleish up on a pin attempt so we all know how this is going to end. And, true to form Fleish gets the fluke roll as Terrell celebrates. Fleish gets punked out by the champs for his troubles. Good match.

Anarchist Doug Williams vs. Mad Dog MacPhie:

The story is that fat American heel manager, Steve Linsky tried to sign Williams. Williams said no. Linsky releases his stable, which consists of MacPhie, MacDonald and Johnny Storm, on Williams. The story is that if Williams beats all three, Linsky leaves the UWA. Williams can go but this series of matches doesn't show it. MacPhie crotches Williams on the ring post until he gets DQed making the match time about 15 seconds.

Anarchist Doug Williams vs. Johnny Storm:

Storm is the WAY! He opens the match with a Merosault and a split-legged moonsault and I am digging it the most. These two rip it up for about four minutes with Storm busting out about every move in his aerial offense. In a moment of mass delusion, Williams even hits an OLD school tope. A Lionsault later and Williams is two down and one to go. Linsky freaks out on Storm and slaps him which turns the entire stable on him. They walk out and Williams wins to banish Linsky from the UWA. Blah. I hate Sports Entertainment.

SHOW THREE

To Far Gone vs. Jody Fleish/Big Pappa T vs. Johnny Storm/Mad Dog MacPhie:

Terrell's partner in crime is Steve Morocco. They also have the World's Greatest Tag Titles. These things are just a giant skull and crossbones with chains attached. The story is that these are the belts that the former champs the Death Squad made. The Death Squad is also pissed at To Far Gone because with the help of Ian Harrison, (another wrestler with amazingly tiny pants) they took their women. So this match has all the hot valets at ringside. Poor Jody is paired with one of the worst wrestlers in the history of tights. Amazingly enough, these two are former tag champs. The match is decent because MacPhie and Big Pappa T never get in the ring. The parts with Fleish and Storm are the best. The ending is weird as it comes out of nowhere. Fleish and Storm go for springboard splashes, collide in mid-ring. Terrell comes down with a splash and pins both. Total match was maybe four minutes.

Phil Powers vs. Paul Sloane - No DQ:

This would be the finest example of the weird chronological order of the UWA. If you read Schneider's review of the October show, then will remember that these two were teaming up. Well, in the video package recapping the breakup between teacher and student, they show highlights of the October match. Mind you, that it is still September. Oh well. As I mentioned, this the standard neglected student turns on teacher fare. Powers is the teacher. Sloane is the student. Neither is very good. The no DQ stipulation is just an excuse for the two of them to wear ill-fitting jeans and hit each other with an aluminum can. Bad, bad match. Powers wins. Now, begone from my TV screen.

Anarchist Doug Williams vs. Danny Royal:

Well, somehow Royal managed to parlay his TV non-title win into a shot at the Heavyweight title held by Williams. Boy, Royal really isn't good. Short match that has the least important ref bump ever. Ref gets hit accidentally. Royal hits bad "Beef Bomb" #1. No ref. Royal hits bad "Beef Bomb" #2. Ref recovers but Royal only gets two. So Royal hits bad "Beef Bomb" #3 and gets the win. I can see how this match really build up Williams for his match with Christopher Daniels.

This month's batch was nowhere near as good as the last batch we got. I think the fact that Daniels and Tiger Mask IV were on the other tape might be a big reason for that.

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@#@#@#@#@#@# Big Japan 1-2-00 Korakuen Hall
(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

FANTASTIK/RYUJI ITO vs. BENEKI DAIKOBOKO/MASAYOSHI MOTEGI:

They clipped this sucker all to heck, leaving us with one diving headbutt to the floor by Fantastik and a lot of Motegi beating up Ito. Ito is one of the skinniest wrestlers I have ever seen- he makes Shiga look like Mark Madden. Motegi has a new shaved sides mullet, and didn't actively stink up this match as he is wont to do.

TOMOKO WATANABE vs. KYOKO ICHIKI:

Tomoko is reaching a Kyoko Inoue level of chubbed outness. This was a basic Watanabe squash, and I really don't care for Watanabe so I didn't really give a shit. Ichiki gets some offense in, but there wasn't much worthwhile going on here. For Watanabe completists or those who need to fill up two minutes on their Best Of Fired From GAEA tape.

MEN'S TEIOH/JUN KASAI vs. ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER/CRAZY SHEIK:

This was an Abdullah matches with all that entails. Abby Stabby. Kasai bleeds a lot but doesn't really take any big fat bumps. Sheik may suck even more than the 60 year old Abdullah. Only cool things about this match were Teiho's purple hair and the post match Abdullah interview. "KOJIKA, THE BUTCHER IS WAITING, THE BUTCHER IS WAITING, HAPPY NEW YEAR, HAPPY NEW YEAR, HAPPY NEW YEAR" Man I fell out, that is going on my answering machine next Jan 1st.

GUERERRO DEL FUTURO vs. MIKE SAMPLES:

Futuro was wearing his mask, which as a hardcore Lucha fan, I didn't dig. There is a precedent for Luchadores who have lost their mask to wear it in Japan (Chris Benoit lost his mask in both Mexico and Japan, Mr. Aguila and Gran Markus both appeared on recent CMLL Japan shows wearing masks), but I am among the school which says, if a wrestler loses their mask (which Futuro did to El Hijo Del Santo) you should never wear another mask again, no switching gimmicks, no losing your mask twice, you lose it, its gone. BTW this match was a 20 second Samples squash. This must have been casual Friday in Big Japan because Samples ditched the dress shirt and tie and was wearing a black and white stretch shirt that looked like the kind of thing my dad would wear to a picnic.

DANIKAI ARM WRESTLING TOURNAMENT: Samples, Matsunaga, Beneki and Seikimoto all arm wrestle. Samples wins, and for the first time in wrestling history an armwrestling match happened with out the table being overturned and used as a weapon. I am not sure about whether this was legit or not. I think it was a mix of works and shoots like RINGS. Beneki v. Sekimoto was definitely real, but I think Samples v. Matsunaga was worked, Samples appeared

to be lifting his elbow a bit, and Matsunaga definitely didn't twist his wrist as much as he could have. I will have to watch the tape again to be sure.

KAMAKAZI/SHUNME MATSUZAKI vs. WINGER/SHADOW WX:

This was for the Big Japan tag belts and was a surprisingly good standard Heavyweight tag match. No garbage spots at all, just basic tag team wrestling. Matsuzaki is about as old school as it gets (he kind of wrestles like a less flashy Yatsu), and Kamakazi toned down his fat boy highflying and worked a lot more power spots. Winger wrestled the majority of the match, as he is a stronger pro-style worker than the GARBAGE 4-LIFE WX. They did a pretty cool backdrop driver knockout spot, where Winger was laid out after Shunme dumped him. This also had lots of Sentons, basic Suplexes, a Winger tope-con-hilo and two Kamakazi fatass moonsaults. The ending was kind of anticlimactic as Kamikaze just rolled through a rana and hit a lariat, but the rest of the match was fine professional wrestling, and well worth your 17 minutes.

TOMOKAI HONMA vs. RYUJI YAMAKAWA:

Tomokai Honma and Ryuji Yamakawa have been carving out a unique niche in professional wrestling, delivering garbage matches which are head and shoulders above anything else ever done in the art form. Carving is the right adjective, because their matches have been liberally sprinkled with blood and scars as they find new ways to drive each other into barbed wire and glass, and new ways to set each other on fire. This is their second high profile singles match, and although it isn't as mindblowingly great as their 6/20/99 match, it still was quality professional wrestling. Yamakawa comes out in full white cowboy gear and has a cap gun fight with a mysterious stranger, he then grabs a lady, throws her over his shoulder and takes her down to ringside. Ignoring the irony of the homoerotic Yamakawa kidnapping a woman, the greatest thing about this entrance (and the match, and Big Japan as a whole, hell the greatest thing in the history of televised sport) was Yamakawa's pants, WHITE SNAKESKIN!! Beat that with a stick jack! It was a shame he was wearing those spectacular pants in a death match where they can get stained with blood and ripped up and such, although they seemed unharmed. Can you dryclean snakeskin? The match started with an amateur wrestling sequence, which I freaking love, only in Big Japan, do the wrestlers go for the 2 point takedown, while surrounded by barbed wire and beds of nails. They do some more wrestling and Honma does the first cool spot of the match as he counters an Irish whip by doing a Tiger Mask run up the ropes backflip on the barbed wire board. They then do a long sucky, I grab your hair, and let's walk, section, which dropped the match down a little for me. When they get back in the ring the death commences. Honma hits a nasty Samoan drop into the barbed wire, which just crushes Yamakawa back, bloodying it up something good. The next big spot, is a repeat of the Ultimo v. Ohtani fight for the top rope rana, except this was a rana through a barbed wire board. Yamakawa wins the battle and drops Honma with the rana, he then follows that up with a liger bomb on the Barbed Wire. Then Honma takes control with an enzigiri and somersault lariat and basically is in control for the rest of the match. I think this is the big psychological flaw in this match, Yamakawa sells and bumps way too much for someone who was putting Honma over. Honma just kills him for the last ten minutes, hitting a top rope rana to the floor through a Barbed wire board, a running powerbomb through the board to the bed of nails, a sitout piledriver, and a bunch of nasty running elbows. The work was great, especially the end

sequence which was very FMW cum All Japan, but I really would have like to see Honma sell and bump more if he was getting the belt. Also the usual Wagner Power Sprayer Honma blade job was not present as he got out-bled by our friend Ryuji. It actually reminded me of the Misawa v. Kawada match from last years Dome show, with the drama being hurt by the sense of inevitability. I have a lot of complaints about this match, but it was really great. Their match last year set such a high standard, this one didn't live up to that standard, but is still a must see, and a worthy addition to the legend these two are weaving.

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DRAMATIC DREAM TEAM 9/30/1999- HANDHELD
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

"DDT- The Zillion Houseshow Handhelds" have crashed on the shores of America and BOY are they examples of Japan Indie Sleaze DELUXE! DDT is EXACTLY like if everybody in OMEGA was transplanted into the ECWA. It has the high talent level per-capita of an average OMEGA card of yore, but it is SOOO ECWA-like in it's Super-Indie vicarious thrill of having AMAZINGLY elaborate goofball angles at the top- angles that top anything the Big Two do. There is wads of good to really good to bizarrely strangely good to great matches on these tapes and- of course- your heaping helping of total hopeless suck. I'll have NOW done the hard part: I've begun to figure out who is who and I'll try to describe them. I used the DDT tournament 6-man for identifying Kengo Takai, since he was the only one not on the MAIN tape that I had a matchlist for. THUS! HERE IS YOUR PALEONTOLOGICAL PIECING TOGETHER ON THE PEOPLE ON THE DDT TAPE from the sketchy information I've gathered from mysterious sources:

RESEARCH NOTES FOR DDT 9/30/1999:

GREETINGS! This is your lecture notes for the sleazarific DDT handhelds. I've deleted the guys who were Identified on the Junior Tourney tape (reviewed in the much-heralded, thoroughlt beloved DVDVR #114.)

*from 4/99.

Item #1: TAKAI is the fuzzy little gamara boy with the parachute shorts that is another in a long line of pseudoBattlARTSIANS that permeate the Japanese indies like be-mulleted bleach blond make-up wearing roided-out fat boys permeating US Indies.

*info garnered from 10/27/99 matchlist (not reviewed today. Maybe in #116ish or so. Unless I get some BattlARTS or Big Japan in. Or more GAEA. And that TORYUMON is sitting RIGHT here,)

-ITEM #2: Tsunehito Naito- no-selling, no-neck beefhead. WAR heavyweight without the grace and charisma. Could definately work for the US big two because he is sporting the giant rack... oh wait!

-ITEM #3: Yuki Nishino- mullet reminiscent of Hollywood bob starr, bad blue and red singlet and is need of a wispy moustache to totally get that "COPS in Tokyo" feel to the look. Decent enough little worker though.

-ITEM #4: Phantom Funakoshi- It's Shinjiro Ohtani's older brother Buddy. HE'S A PHANTOM! wears the towel around his neck like Inoki or maybe he is fan of the Hands of Stone, Ronnie Garvin. Phantom is a mystery wrapped in riddle ...

-ITEM #5: Teneichi Kacho- Tie-wearing comedy guy who is more pathetic than funny- which means he REALLY sucks because I- personally- love horrendously crappy Indie get-ups and amazingly stupid gimmicks. I mean c'mon. I'm an idiot when it comes to that kinda stuff.

-ITEM #6: Mitsunobu Kikuzawa- johnny Grunge guy from the Junior Tournament and he's losing altitude everytime I see him, as he isn't that good when not in with Makami or ONRYO. I think he is affiliated with Moebius, which would make sense. yeah sure...

-ITEM #7: Shigeo Kato- looks like chonocito. this was the cigarette guy from the Moebius homepage. The chick with these guys isn't Mita and I can't place her. Maybe Miss Mongol has put on some weight. I'm gonna say "YES, it's Miss Mongol."

-ITEM #8: Poison Sawada- looks very Ace Frehleyesque, patriotic pants. Decent enough little worker, one would surmise from footage viewed.

ITEM #9: Yasaku- lumpy bleached Indie Kojima admirer. A whole lot of lariats. Actually on the brink of good.

ITEM #10: Super Rider- GREAT emerald green bug mask, can't do body slams, sloppy as hell with pro style, surprisingly good at shootstyle. If he gets better a little and GETS ON THE JUICE, he and Asian Cougar would be a viable tagteam- because their tag matches are good up to the point where Super Rider's Pro Style shortcomings make the whole thing STIIIIINNKK.

ITEM #11: Daisaku- Blue pants kickerboy. He's actually really good for being one-half of the erstwhile Nagano Cream Team with Yasuku. He'll kick ya right in the face and ya gotta love that. I think this guys has wrestled in IWA RESTART, because he looks familiar.

ITEM #12: NiHao- mini Mutoh or AAA Fujinamicito Jr. Pants are very memorable.

ITEM #13: Koichiro Kimura- no selling shooto guy who I thought was Masahiko Orihara. This guys will go far in my book if starts selling more. Kicks like a real motherfucker and his matches are all pretty chaotic and worked-shooty superstiff- like Hashimoto vs Ogawa reenactments every match. Folks end up looking legit pissed by the time it's over so it's FUN!

ITEM #14: Masahiko Orihara: Great mask and hair. Tags with the far more memorable Koichiro Kimura.

These are the 14 newly identified Indie wrestlers. Anyone else, I'll just write what it sounds like when the ring announcer makes with the introductions. WHOMP ASS!

DDT 9/30/1999- the actual ANALYSIS!

((Well fuck, this didn't take long)- sounds like) LOG HiroshiIIIIIIII/Tanomusako Toba vs Yasaku/Daisaku:

Hey! This match was really fucking great. Diasaku and Toba REALLY beat the holy shit outta each other and it's all great and stuff. Log is all about the little, disturbing peach pants. He is good going shoot-a-rific with Daisaku and matches up well with the actually credible looking pro stylings of Yasaku. He and Diasaku have a big batch of wrestling after the initial flurry of Diasaku and Toba beating the living fuck out of each other- as LOG goes for Diasaku's knee early and often with a massive quantity of mid-grade leg grinding that never gets flashier than a Dragon Screw. Toba isn't afraid to take Yasaku's New Japan offense right on top of his head as he oversells the lummoxy Yasaku WAR Heavyweight lowgrade power MOVESET~! to the point of making it look all devastating and shit. Yasaku acquits himself well though by taking a bunch of really big kicks right to the mush- and golly knows Toba will punch ya right in the motherfucking face. This is a good little match primarily because Toba and Diasaku bring the pummeling and LOG brings the psic. Diasaku isn't good at selling so he isn't great or anything but he's good enough to be fun in this tiny setting. Yasaku is actually solid but you really can't get past the fact he looks like Kojima- if Kojima was kicked out of New Japan for being caught trying to smuggle guns and steroids into Germany and then got off the gas, got kinda fat and was slumming it in the sleazy Japanese Indies.

Teneichi Kacho vs. Kurekage:

(a recent Historical Fiction) Kacho works for the Sony corporation and- at the end of the work week- he rushes off to his SECOND secret passion. He got into pro wrestling after it became too expensive for him to actually golf anymore since he STILL hadn't made middle-management yet and he had the alimony payments and all, plus his interest was revitalized in Pro Wrestling watching that crazy WWF show that he got from that Hong Kong station that he picks up. Starting out as a way to stay in shape and fight the sedentary pounds that his lifestyle was producing, Kacho found that he really was drawn to the spotlight that Puroresu would shine on a (before-then) nobody in the billing department. His boss had heard about his foray into pro graps and now they talked around the water cooler before work about the goings on in the wrestling world. The secretaries giggled when they found out about his new his new hobby but they all ask him about his matches and the crazy hi-jinks that happened. Kacho runs and gets in shape and gets into his character. Kacho says to himself in a mental voice like an Occidental Duane Johnson, "I represent the BRIDGE between the wrestling fan and the actual escape that is puroresu! I wrestle for YOU- the shmoe in the cubicle who is down to yanking it to Sailor Moon Anime and who is brow-beaten by callous management overlords- the SAME people that can't provide the promised stability that dragged you into this hateful corporate environment to begin with." Kacho wears his khakis and tie to the ring as symbol- a symbol of the office wonk who will never score with the uptight chicks in the typing pool and who will never race superbikes with the with-it and together young hard-chargers who made middle management after five years. In his cubicle, he is a broken, beaten man but on FRIDAYS he is his OWN

MAN! HE IS STONE COLD AND THE BIG SHOW ROLLED INTO ONE! "I am KACHO! And NOW I AM SOMEBODY!"

On the other hand, Kurakage gets the call from the DDT brass saying that everything is filled up on the card and that all that is left is a comedy match with that tie-wearing guy.

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KUREKAGE: I am a serious wrestler who has worked hard to make a name for myself in the indies. Why should I wrestle this buffoon?

DDT: C'mon bill. It'll be funny. He's got spirit and he does those funny comedy skits and that hilarious out-to-lunch tie-straightening PEOPLE'S ELBOW! Have you seen it? It's

TREMENDOUS!

KUREKAGE: Fuck that shit. Can I beat him to within an inch of his life at least?

DDT: No no no. It's a COMEDY match. Wear your suit, he'll dropkick your coat when you hang it in the corner and then you get MAD! and then you win in two minutes. C'mon Bill. We swear- Asian Cougar or Mikami next time. We just got overbooked, but we still need your magic, Big Man.

KUREKAGE: Jesus, man, I'm above this shit. Who is Sasaki working?

DDT: Takagi. It's booked solid. C'mon Bill, \$40 is \$40.

KUREKAGE: I want free drinks and dry-cleaning. He fucks up my suit and I will rip that little motherfucker's soul out. You got my word THAT.

DDT: Take it easy, Bill. It'll be fine.

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Kurekage hangs up the phone and thinks about his career. How will he ever get ahead doing shit like this? Between this, Onita and that freak at IWA booking him for matches, he was deeply looking at becoming the world's most talented obscure middle weight, a better version of Takeru or the tallest Battle Ranger ever. Depressed, he takes his suit out of the closet. It was double-breasted because he remembered how cool Bryan Ferry looked in a double breasted suit when he went to see him at Budokan on the Slave To Love tour. He looked in the mirror to make sure it still fit him. It had been a while since the last wedding he had attended (Yumi's wedding floods his mind- baby's breath in her hair, in white lace off-setting the stark black hair that circles around down to her shoulders, goddess-like, forever out of reach from then on). He was surprised at how good he looked in it- it made his shoulders, that were already broad in relation to the rest of his trim body, look even broader. The suit made him feel important and big league and not just a muscle boy thug- like a suit would make Joe Frazier or George Foreman look back when he was a child watching them on TV. Kurekage had pretty and fragile dreams that he acted out in his mind when he first tried on the suit- dreams of wearing it to press conferences to announce voyages to wrestle ECW in America or to announce a heated blow-off against Shinzaki in FMW. those dreams seemed foolish to him now as he thought about taking it the ring to play straight man to a weekend warrior with an unfunny comedy gimmick- and he was truly sad and broken in his soul.

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KACHO: It is an honor to represent the office workers of Japan in an athletic Sports Entertainment exhibition against an opponent as formidable as yourself.

KUREKAGE: Yeah that's really great. Get your spots in quickly and keep you knees flat in case my Moonsault goes off center. And if you mess up my suit, I SWEAR that I'll rip your motherfucking throat out and show it to you.

KACHO: Jesus, Bill. What the fuck is your problem tonight?

KUREKAGE: Shut the fuck up- Just don't fuck up anything out there!

KACHO: Bill, I'm hurting here. I bust my ass all week getting in shape and working my day job too, looking forward to this ONE thing....

KUREKAGE: Goddamit, look....Hmmm... I'm sorry, Teneichi. It's..it's nothing. I'm sorry. C'mon, let's give the folks a show and have a couple of laughs. It's been a long week and I've had a lot on my mind... hey, c'mon fuck it, let's go out there and have a match...

KACHO: Hey, I'm here for you, you can always talk to me.....HELL YEAH! Can you SMELL what the KACHO is COOKIN'!?!

Kurekage sells Kacho's offense and gets into position to set up the clown's awful, business-exposing spots. While laying down to set up the missed knee-drop spot, Kurekage thought about how his suit now felt like a cocktail dress and how his homage to Hayabusa mask suddenly felt like cheap mascara on his face. Kurekage hits his moonsault, gets the pin without messing up the cuff of his pants, puts on his coat and enters the night...

I usually don't mention this kinda stuff because I'm SOOO all about the workrate and shit, but they have this foray into sports entertainment that will make you blow the Fresca out of your nose like a light-tasting, citrus-flavored nasal geyser- as the leader of the heel stable that is bedeviling Stone Cold Takagi comes out with this EVIL MOEBIUS AMAZINGLY SEXUALLY QUESTIONABLE DANCE-TROOP and they do the most elaborate dance routine to ever grace a mere wrestling card. Fosse-esque in spirit and spunky show-biz drenched flourishes; Merce Cunningham-inspired in it's erotic, entangling, sweeping gestures; and Twyla Tharpian in it's hip, odd, repitious hand gestures. All performed by five long-haired pseudo-Eurotrash Warm Leatherette Boyz. It seems like it would last forever but you wish it would never end. It's really elaborate and fruity. Welcome To Japan, MotherFucker.

THEN Takagi does this angle where he gets the drop on Kimura- who tried to kill our Stone Cold/The Rock PuroresuCONGLOM Called Takagi with the world's most hideous armbar (as seen in highlight form on the DDT Jumbotron). The Kawasaki RattleSnake and meanest SOB in DDT poses as SUPER UCHU POWER! and springs on Kimura after an endless rambling STICKFEST OF EVIL which was twice as long as the disturbing dance number. The sweet embrace of a fast forward should be utilized at numerous non-dancing, non-unmasking sections of this epic section of SKITS!

(possibly) LOW-AHHH Ran-gAHHHH/ Mitsunobu Kikuzawa/ Shigeo Kato vs Phantom Funakoshi/ Poison Sawada/ Tsunehito Naito:

Poison is actually famous in super freaked Japan Indie Fan Circles because he wrestled a glass and COBRA and sumthin match against a mummy once and I hear it was the worst match ever

to make it onto an Internationally traded handheld. I haven't seen it, so it may have been quite a Transcendent Foray into some sorta shit, so who knows. As for your boy, Poison, in this match- I can't help shaking a feeling of a young Sam Houston- OOOOOHHH YEAH! PHANTOM is Ohtani's older doppelganger and he hits a nice suplex and that's about the end of the Ohtani resemblance past physical appearance. On the upside, Phantom isn't NEARLY as annoying as Ohtani and actually apes Ohtani's perfect dropkick pretty well. Naito is a real tazmaniac- as he no-sells and SHOOTs into submissions, his magnificent breasts heaving in shootstyle grandeur. Kikuzawa acts scared of him and runs to tag out; thus Low-ahh ran-gah is his first submission victim to succumb to the workings of Naito. Shigeo Kato takes him to the mat and looks competent on the mat (remember that Moebius founder Orihara has had numerous side-hurtingly funny forays into shootstyle, so I have no idea where THIS would come from...). Kato reminds me of a Japanese indie version of JUNGLA but with a cool brainbuster and swanky top rope elbow. I think I'm falling in love.... ANYWAY, I'm guessing that RIIN-GAHHHH is Kendo Nagasaki's fourth or fifth bastard son to permeate the Japanese Indies- as I guess Nagasaki brandished the Kendo stick quite a bit back in the day- if you dig where I'm going. He's all Old School heelish and he and Kikuzawa bring the STORY OF THE MATCH- where Kikuzawa is afeared of Naito, so Rin-gah helps the Grunge-like Mitsunobu cheat to win! and IT'S FUN! After a while, Phantom and Naito clean house- Phantom with a comically low altitude Missile Dropkick and Naito with a nasty German- all so Poison can apply the seedy indie cum Lucha proposterous submission on Kikuzawa and we call it a match. I think I love all these guys, but not because they are really good or anything.

Yuki Nishino/ NiHao vs Super Rider/ FromIWAJapan Sho Yuuukeeee!:

This match was a weirdly good match that got REALLY cool by the end. Sho Yuki is a big youngster who looks a lot like pre-gassed Nakanishi- and who is luckily better in the ring than the former Kurasawa. Nishino has the crappiest redneck mullet in allll of Japan, so he's definately got that "something" going for him. Plus he can work. Super Rider is quite problematic at this point. He and shootastic NiHao kick each other really hard and go to the mat early and often. It's good because Super Rider looks great flying into kneebars and Cross-Armbreakers because there is nothing cooler than a guy in green insect mask going shootstyle on your ass. He stays in kicking mode in this and thus this match is good- as opposed to other DDT matches I've seen him in, where his horrendous weakness at pro style ruins matches. Yuki brings the biggest highspot- a running Senton off the apron set up by Rider's Maeda's RINGs MORTAL~! The ending is all elaborate as Nishino, SuperRider and Nihao do this intricate set up to get to the "Nishino lariats Nihao- BY ACCIDENT" spot and THEN there is an even more elaborate finish when Nishino and Super Rider do a super-extended bunch of reversals to get Super Rider to the point of procuring the Crucifix for the pin. Okay, maybe Nishino actually RULES it from an elaborate lucha mindset point of veiw. Yuki was really impressive for a scummy IWA punk I had never seen and who doesn't even exist on ANY of the IWA matchlists I was trying to steal information from. NiHao and Super Rider looked good from a kicking and submission perspective, but NiHao's selling is WAAAY pedestrian and ungood. You should prolly keep an eye on all these guys though for a myriad reasons: Nishino because he seems to make thoroughly shitty indie six-man throw-togethers become cohesive and watchable; Yuki because he seems to have a future in this sport if he gets past the Brian Lee level suck-ass elbow drops,

because he's big enough to make a Puroresu dent; and Super Rider and NiHao because they kick really hard but have big Pro Style problems to overcome.

Takashi Sasaki vs. Sanshiro Takagi:

This match was really motherfucking good. Maybe Doron Diamond was right and Sasaki is the real deal of DDT- as opposed to Makami- because Sasaki looks like quite the Ikeda Lite to Tagaki's poor man's Ishikawa and Sasaki makes it all riveting and shit. This match starts out on the Great Motherfucking Match path but gets slightly sidetracked by a couple of factors to bring it back to earth. It starts out with each really beating the living fuck out of each other with big kicks and chops- with Sasaki going MEMPHIS on Takagi by insertting kicks where the Lawler punches would be when getting the offensive transition. It gets derailed when Takagi basically sells an endless ass-kicking by Sasaki- highlighted by Sasaki's breath-takingly dick-like powermoves: the running Northern Lights Bomb, the Ontological Argument for the Existence of the Destiny Hammer, and my personal fave- the jumping knee right to your motherfucking face. It's smart booking because they seem to be setting up Sasaki, Takagi and Yoshida against Kimura, Kikuzawa and Kurakage- which would be balls out. But it's still just a way to get Sasaki over more, as opposed to having a really great match, which these two seem to have in them. Or Sasaki does anyway. Takagi is pretty limited offensively, but he does the cool 2 and 8999/9000 nearfall and does the BRAND NEW 9 56/57ths count stand-up for knockdowns. It was tricked out enough to work- what with Sasaki's impressive arsenal and athletic ass-stomping and Takagi's solid-but-unspectacular US Pro Style leanings. This is definately worth looking for, but I'm guessing their definitive match is down the road a piece.

EXCITING YOSHIDA vs. Koichiro Kimura:

Goddamn, well whaddyaknow, these two are actually good. I've seen Exciting Yoshida matches and thought that he sucked the throbbing blood-bomber at length- BUT then you see him outside of the Onita Pro Scramble death matches and you realize that he is another in the new wave of Japan Indie Puerto Rican Pro Style followers- falling in line between the masterful PR-drenched stylings of Abby Kobayashi Jr and the lesser stylings of non-deathmatch Ryuji Yamakawa. When all these guys are accomplished and influential, Kendo Nagasaki will be known as the Godfather of Neuvo PR Pro-Style when it sweeps pro wrestling, since he is responsible directly or indirectly for instilling the PR mindset in Japan Indie Wrestling. Either way, Exciting Yoshida works like I think a young Masa Fuchi would have worked: procuring wrestling holds, working the ropes, doing well-executed roll-ups, selling really well and not stepping outside the boundaries of the psychology of the match. Kimura sells more than adequately for Yoshida and that was going to be the sticking point for me with the physically impressive Kimura- as I had been put off by his lack of selling in the tagmatch that would happen a month later. Either way, Kimura is all about the cool-ass submission and the fat ass kicks- so I have to love him to a certain level. Yoshida makes it a really good match by being wiley and fiesty and couteracting the physical difference between the two- a difference that would not make the match up credible any other way, I would say. In other words, Yoshida can't match the strength, speed, or complete assholish ass-stomping capabilities of Kimura, but he can surprise his undermatched opponent with fast roll-ups and- actually- some really cool-ass reversals into tiny respites of offense, all just killing time until Kimura gets Yoshida in the center

of the ring and puts him away. Pretty basic match from a storyline perspective, but surprisingly good in execution. Postmatch, Orihara comes out to align with Kimura and piss off Takagi, as DDT goes GAEA-like in it's elaborate angles.

This tape is quality wrestling, but there is no match that blows the roof off the mutha. I liked it, but HEY! I'm a real freak. it's not amazing or anything, but I would definately recommend it.

~@~

MIKE NAIMARK's SHOOT n STUFF!

!!

I can hear members of the DVDVR's shoot-savvy readership already; "Aw C'MON Mike, you're going to review Universal ValeTudo Fighting I? Why write about this mediocre show when you've got perfectly good PRIDE events just waiting to be watched again!"

To you detractors, I can only say, "KNOW YOUR ROLE AND...."

Yikes....I was only on RSPW for 15 minutes this afternoon, and I'm already substituting dick-waving catchphrases in place of honest editorial commentary. I won't make that mistake again, if ya smell what...Ah nuts.

UNIVERSAL VALE TUDO FIGHTING I (5/4/96)

The year is 1996, and Bill Clinton is only a suspected leech who is presumed to keep his pants on more often than not. The Ultimate Fighting Championship is off to a blistering start, introducing a generation of North Americans to the harsh realities of real martial arts combat. And overseas in the land of thick udon soups and naked gameshows, many of the top stars in the fledgling world of MMA have gathered to compete side by side with no-names and gutsy goobers in a sparsely packed sumo arena. Down in the ring, all the fighters come out together to the boxing ring that serves as the fighting stage and salute the crowd before the action begins. I've always admired this gesture, which seems to be fairly common in Japanese combat sports. In this testosterone-charged pack of professional ass-kickers, the astute observer can spy the flat head of Hugo Durate, the freakish semi-human features of Wallid Ismail, and the bloated expressionless gutsack, Koji Kitao. Lets get to the action!

1) Johil De Oliveria v Akira Nagase

If you wanted to represent the national pride of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, you could do a lot worse than Johil, who enters the ring wearing a stunning black turtleneck that just screams, "Slap a beret on me and I'm ready to scream like a cheerleader at the first site of a German". Johil is a multi-time winner of Brazilian national sportative BJJ competitions back home, putting him in an impressive list that includes Alan Goes and Mario Sperry. Hailing from the SAW promotion and weighing a spindly 165lbs, Akira Nagase does his best to look unimpressed during the introductions. After a brief grapple following a missed whip kick from Nagase, Johil grabs the waist lock and takes him to the mat where he quickly gets the rear mount and starts firing down precision strikes on the back of Nagase's noggin'. Nagase stays turtled up, so De Oliveria decides to up the ante

with a few painful elbow strikes to the back of the neck. Nagase gives a burst of frantic energy, and actually wiggles his way free to regain his feet. The crowd cheers lustily as the two fighters circle in the center of the ring, neither looking comfortable with their stand-up game. Suddenly De Oliveria leaps forward with a lead left that cracks Nagase on the cheekbone, and follows up with a quick-fisted flurry. Another lead right, and Nagase is reeling under the Brazilian's uncharacteristic boxing assault. The next flurry knocks the Japanese fighter flat on his keester, and Johil follows him top the ground, leaping into the guard to land a clubbing right before escaping the guard and returning to his feet. In a stunning reversal of fortune, we now must endure a Brazilian attempting to cope with the dreaded Brazilian Butt-Scoot, and Johil doesn't disappoint, leaping once again into the face of danger to land a crushing headbutt square to the middle of Akira's rapidly-swelling mug. After backing off again, Johil comes right back with a leaping right hand that lands with a sickening thud against Nagase's temple, and if you look closely at the crowd, you can see a number of people wincing at the sound of the impact. Nagase kicks him off, more out of instinct than anything else, and amazingly enough BECKONS JOHIL TO COME TO THE GROUND WITH HIM! Hasn't he been watching the fight? Johil eagerly lunges at Nagase, lands a dozen or so punches to force him to roll over, and calmly sinks in the rear-naked choke. Its all over for the spunky local kid, as Johil prepares to wring his neck, when out of nowhere..A bell? Hmmm, the match is declared OVER, and Oliveria is quickly declared the winner via judges decision. No doubt about who won this fight, which is more than I can say for a lot of judge's decisions. Oliveria removes his black turtleneck to reveal a heavily taped right elbow.

2) Ebenezer Fontes Braga (1.8M 91Kg BJJ) v Naohisa Kawamura (1.8M 81Kg)

Another SAW fighter, Kawamura mugs for the crowd, which Fontes-Braga carries the cool demeanor of a veteran porn star at a swinger's party. They grapple standing, and Fontes-Braga quickly turns a waist lock into a full-mount as they tumble to the mat. Kawamura wisely grabs a poorly-positioned ankle and tries to hook it, forcing Fontes-Braga to relinquish his dominant mounted position into guard just to keep the pressure off his foot. Once in guard, however, the Brazilian shows his technical mastery by rapidly neutralizing his foes' offense and once again getting a dominant position, this time an inverted side mount on the turtled Kawamura. A hail of elbows to the head later, and Kawamura is definitely looking the worse for wear, bleeding from the mouth and nose while his eye swells noticeably. Fontes-Braga decides to end the charade once and for all, and in a split second scoots back and fires a pair of crushing kneestrikes to Kawamura's poorly-defended head. Kawamura flops face first to the mat, where Fontes-Braga lands a single punch to the point of the jaw before being dragged off by the referee. As Kawamura lays unconscious on the mat, Fontes-Braga has his hand raised in victory! Three weird names, two big balls, one bad motherfucker! EBENEZER FONTES BRAGA!

3) Antonio Carlos Ribeiro (1.78M 82Kg Luta Livre) v Todd Medina (1.78M 104Kg JKD)

Hey lookie here! Its UFC veteran Todd 'Funky Cold' Medina! UFC fans might remember him from such events as UFC V! Lest you underestimate the tubby Medina, might I remind you that he is a practitioner of that most deadly of martial arts, Jeet Kun Do! And he's facing Antonio Carlos Rineiro, who looks so much older than when he was starring in 'Silver Spoons' with Ricky Schroeder. Get in there and do Bruce Lee proud! Ribeiro gets the quick single-leg takedown

and advances to side-mount. From there he works rapidly to achieve the full mount, immediately hooking the legs in true jiu-jitsu fashion. Medina, who looks to have a sizable weight advantage, tries in vain to elevate Ribeiro, but the chunky Brazilian hangs on for dear life, throwing the occasional punch but otherwise not being too active. Medina finally rolls over onto his stomach, and Ribeiro naturally goes for the rear-naked choke, because he's a damn Brazilian so what else would he do? Medina shrugs off the choke and rolls to his back, placing his opponent back in the full-mount. Ribeiro rears back to throw more punches, but Medina gives a might buck of his hips and sends a shocked Ribeiro butt-first to the mat! Using quickness that belies his Silver King-esque physique, Medina rolls forward and grabs a guillotine choke and pulls Ribeiro into his guard, hoping to use his legs to extra cranking power on the choke. Instead, Ribeiro pops his head out scoots out of the guard to his feet. A few comically wide punches later and Ribeiro is right back in the guillotine choke, and Medina is shaking him like a rat terrier. Its tappin' time! Your winner using the mystical techniques of the Green Hornet's own Kato, TODD MEDINA!

And now for some 'sports entertainment', Vale Tudo style, as two nondescript your Brazilians come to the ring wearing their jiu-jitsu gi's. As an older man shouts instructions in Portuguese from somewhere off-camera, the two men run through a series of basic judo throws and armlocks, while the Japanese crowd shows the kind of enthusiasm I usually associate with matches involving Lex Luger. More Portuguese is barked, and now they're demonstrating rudimentary kicking techniques, a laughable sight given the fact that these fans have undoubtedly been jaded by K-1 Kickboxing and have seen real kickboxers throw those kicks with real authority. This worthless demonstration goes on for seemingly ever, each variation on the armbar considered, each hip-throw Jon Hessian in their execution. Mercifully, the demonstration ends and the crowd gives a tepid round of applause as they return from the restrooms.

4) Marcello Mendes (1.7M 81Kg BJJ) v Michael Stam (1.9M 110Kg)

Michael Stam is a big, big, big freaky lookin' guy. Like a cross between Tony Halme and 'The Wall', except Stam doesn't have balls of iron or the pasty physique of a pig farmer. The two men circle in the middle of the ring, and circle, and circle....Oh boy. This is like Severn v Shamrock II, except I don't care about what either guy does in the match. The bell rings ending the first round, which featured about as much action as a Kane v Big Slob classic. The second round starts, and Stam lands one pushing punch that sends Mendes out of the ring. Although the blow didn't seem to be too violent, Mendes sports a bloody nose upon his return. Stam closes, but Mendes dances away. Before long, Mendes is literally running from his opponent, turning his back several times to get out of his reach as the crowd boos his lack of fighting spirit. Stam finally cuts off the ring and prepare to throw some knuckles when Mendes sinks down, crawls over the bottom rope, and flops on the ring apron like a dead trout! The crowd rains down boos at this act of cowardice, and the referee gives Mendes a full ten-count before awarding the fight to Stam. Perhaps the single greatest act of cowardice I've ever seen in MMA.

5) Wallid Ismail v Dennis Kenafalos

Ah Wallid, you Neanderthal-browed fuzzi-ball. Just a couple of years later, you'll be on top of the MMA world after choking undefeated UFC Champion Royce Gracie into unconsciousness in Brazil. Tonight he gets some no-name, Dennis Kenafalos, and chokes him out in about 30 seconds without any effort whatsoever. Wallid goes on to bigger things, and Kenafalos goes back to his job making slavaki at the Golden Greek Palace in South Jersey.

6) Carla Barreto (1.9M 95Kg BJJ) v Mikhail Ilioukhine (1.7M 91Kg sambo)

Now HERE'S some fighters! Barreto is a huge, wiry Brazilian from the Carlson Gracie camp, possessing enormous natural athleticism, huge hands, and great balance. And all Mikhail Ilioukhine has on his resume is the only legitimate win over the #1 ranked heavyweight fighter in the world today, Russian kickboxing wizard Igor Vovchanchin. Mikhail gets the quick takedown and ends up in Barreto's guard, and the fight stays in the guard for several minutes, with Mikhail trying to advance, and Barreto deftly defending each move. The bell rings, ending the first round. The second round begins with Mikhail lunging for a double-leg takedown, an ill-advised move that Barreto counters with a guillotine. Barreto bides his time and then spins around to take Ilioukhine's back and fire some stiff punches to the Russian's head. After sinking in the hook, Barreto naturally goes for the rear naked choke, and Ilioukhine touches his chin to his chest to protect himself. Barreto throws a series of brutal elbowstrikes to the back of Mikhail's head, each one landing with a dull 'thunk' as the fans roar their approval. Carla goes for the choke once more, finds it unavailable, and returns to vicious elbowstrikes at Ilioukhine's unprotected neck. This time, the choke slips on easily, and the mighty Russian has no choice but to tap out. Carla Barreto wins in one of the most impressive performances of his career!

7) Hugo Duarte (1.8M 98Kg Luta Livre) v Diusel Berto (1.75M 91Kg shootfighting)

Another UFC reject makes an appearance here as UFCX alternate loser Diusel Berto, a chunky guy who looks like the younger version of Junkyard Dog, faces off against Brazilian wrecking machine Hugo Duarte, who is best known to American fans for getting walloped by a fuming Tank Abbott in the UFC. Duarte charges and quickly gets a takedown from a waist lock, moving easily from side-mount to the full-mount. Berto desperately tries to escape, but Duarte grabs an arm and starts cranking furiously. Berto frees his arm and makes it to his feet, only to be waistlifted by the surprisingly large Duarte and slammed to the mat with great force. Easily to the side-mount, Duarte returns to the damaged arm of Berto and applies a top wristlock. From the sidemount, the more Berto twists in a desperate effort to free himself, the more pressure Duarte can apply. Berto taps out just under the three minute mark, and Hugo Duarte, the self-proclaimed 'King of Luta Livre', helps Brazil maintain their dominance at this event. I bet that Mendes guy from the earlier fight has to sit by himself on the flight home.

8) MAIN EVENT - The Pedro (1.9M 100Kg Vale Tudo) v Koji Kitao (2M 170Kg sumo)

For the record, Pedro's name is fully listed as 'Pedro Octavio Merique Cesar', and he's fought under all three surnames before, which makes tracking down his Brazilian fight a real pain in the butt. The Pedro is best known to DVDVR readers as the unfortunate victim of Gary Goodridge's 'wandering hands' in Brazil, but this event took place before the unfortunate scrotal abuse, so Pedro is smirking with confidence, not wincing with remorse. In case you haven't heard the story before, Koji Kitao was a major sumo star in Japan, where he eventually reached the

legendary rank of Grand Champion Yokozuna for his performances at the major baosho tournaments. In a move unheard of in Japan where Sumo is still considered a sport of national pride, Kitao quit sumo competition to pursue other fighting arts, including worked pro-wrestling and shoot events such as this one. Tonight, the blubbery Baby Huey wears a sleeveless gi, which ranks right up there with the short-sleeved suit in fashion annals. Kitao has the nerve to open this fight with a horribly sluggish leg kick, which Pedro neatly avoids. Kitao rushes the smaller Brazilian and pins him in a corner before hurling him to the mat, his own jiggling bulk not far behind. Kitao ends up in half-guard, and from here proceeds to kill the crowd by doing nothing for several minutes. Finally he grinds a chubby elbow into Pedro's face, banging it to the nose a few times and causing Pedro to bleed slightly. Pedro takes advantage of Kitao's poor weight distribution and takes the full guard, drawing cheers from the crowd. Pedro throws some short punches from his back, but Kitao is too high in the guard for the punches to have any great effect. Still, he's clearly winded, which is a freakin' shame since he hardly exerted himself at all by this point. Drop the chalupa, you jiggling jackass. In a mighty burst of energy, Pedro extracts himself from under the 370lb sumo and laboriously climbs over Kitao's broad back with the same tenderness a member of Greenpeace would use in climbing a beached whale. Once in the rear mount (its worth noting that Kitao did NOTHING as Pedro attained his dominant position), Pedro hurls some remarkably nasty elbows, easily the most violent in a night filled with crushing elbow strikes. Kitao covers desperately, and Pedro sinks in his hook to solidify his position on Mt Kitao. More elbows follow, and Kitao taps out without fanfare. As he dismounts the gasping Kitao, Pedro STEPS ON HIS NECK and walks away, the traditional Brazilian sign of disdain for a fallen opponent. Kitao looked like a worthless load of crap here, but I guess the promoters couldn't contact Paul Varelans in time for the show.

So maybe the fights weren't the greatest, but I will say that the quality of this video is unsurpassed - crisp color video and ungarbled audio (yeah, its in Japanese, but I like to hear the fighters grunt like lil' piggies!). Besides, Cariao Barreto put on one of the best performances of his career and looked like the amazing future star that most people pegged him as in 1996. This event really did feature some nasty striking, especially in the first match from De Oliveria and the last match with The Pedro. Koji Kitao is a damn embarassment to the fighting world, and would go on to be beaten by 170lb mushmouth Mark Hall at UFC9 before leaving the world of MMA to a better class of fatso. Still, the event suffered from the lack of foxy Latina ring girls in thongs, an egregious error which I cannot condone. Perhaps I shall attempt to remedy this dearth of jigglng Latina buttock next week, and I review Brazilian tapes LIVE from Carnival in Rio! Well, maybe I'll just have a few drinks and watch the tapes at home, but my heart will be doing the samba with a spicy hot ring girl in San Paolo! Hot hot hot!

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YOUR WRESTLERZ OF THE MONTH: THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS!

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LOVERBOY DENNIS and BEAUTIFUL BOBBY VS a GALAXY of JABRONES!-

[roody-poo squashes on the Superstation]-(TONY GANCARSKI):

Intro: Yes, yes y'all. The Midnights are our wrestler(s) of the week, and dadgummed if they aren't important ones. They were one of the last old-school tag teams, in the sense that they brought impeccable psychology and story to their matches (think of the Andersons without obvious heart conditions and AARP tattoos). However, what made them so necessary was the fact that they brought the old-school to the new school, paving the way for any number of teams. The athleticism and innovation of the New Breed -- perhaps the 80s saddest footnote of a tag team -- wouldn't have happened as it did if it hadn't been for teams like the Midnights making high-workrate, high-concept US Pro tag matches a staple in the NWA. The Midnights were responsible for influencing more than just 80s teams, however. You can see parts of their legacy in any undersized but impeccably athletic team that wouldn't have happened without trailblazers like the Midnights, Rock-N-Rolls, Bulldogs and others providing examples of how Australian Tag Team matches work. It's no stretch to say that the careers of the Hardy's, Helms, and Moore owe a lot to these old-school pioneers, just to mention a few. Perhaps the most important thing about good tag wrestling, though, is that it thrives despite the best efforts of Bischoffs and other dumbkops to kill it dead. Tag matches, whether they be in All Japan, the WWF, or anyplace really but WCW, allow mediocre workers to mask their weaknesses and good workers to look great. They allow the crowds -- markish, not too interested in intricate mat sequences -- to not lose interest in the art of wrestling, to not start chanting for puppies and doing other garbage that entertains in a sporting manner. Tag wrestling, in other words, educates crowds in a way most closely comparable to what WCW Cruiser matches did in the mid to late 90s; fans dropped in to buy the merchandise and left popping for wrestling that made sense. So why the Midnights? Anyone who knows the old school will find that patently obvious. And why their squashes? Because the measure of a great wrestler or team is not how carryable they are (Rikishi Phatu got ***** from Meltzer recently), but how they carry, how they call matches and make matches make sense. To get folks to watch a seven minute exhibition whose outcome wasn't in doubt has always been a rare skill, left to the most competent wrestlers. Just as Ric Flair could prop anyone short of Giant Gonzales up for as long as was necessary, the Midnights often could do the same thing. Rather than look at their matches with seasoned, if unexceptional, workers like the Road Warriors, Dusty Rhodes, etc., I felt it would be an interesting exercise to look at how Eaton and Condrey made jobber matches into great TV.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS vs. THE ROCK (y king) & ITALIAN STALLION:

We know that King worked his Afro like a roadie for Ready For The World, and that Stallion was most definitely a poor man's Sal Bellomo. Still, this match matters. Watch as Condrey drags King through a mat sequence, and as Eaton fronts like Rocky's standing side headlock actually hurts. Of course, I remember seeing Rocky as a world champion here in Jacksonville on cable access in 1990; he feuded with a decidedly bloated Budro and teamed with a copper-coiffed Ernie Ladd. The Stallion bumps like Nell Carter of course, but even his relative ineptitude doesn't faze one of the three or four best US tag units of the 80s. Bobby sells his pedestrian armdrags like a champ, and no one even messes up their mullets. Textbook squash psychology, right down to the Cornette trashtalking when Stallion's being choked in the ropes and the "deliberate flouting of the rulebook." A lot of rollups for two counts by the Midnights, and even a hot tag for The Rock before he goes down to a secondary finisher, the Condrey brainbuster.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS vs. GEORGE SOUTH/PAUL GARNER:

South really kicked a swank mullet and stripbar habitue moustache combo, and Garner was sort of a non-entity in the Techwood Drive Pantheon of Jobbers, though it wasn't for a lack of concentration on aesthetic, what with his very slimming black singlet and all. Eaton and Condrey work the quick tag and double team gambit, showing more moves in thirty seconds (side suplexes, scoop slams, kneedrops, double underhook suplexes, and so on) than many current headlining teams have shown in their entire careers. They smacked South around like Def Leppard's drummer did Scott Keith when Netkkop started licking his arm nub after he'd won a Date With Def Leppard from MuchMusic, then dumped South into his own corner for the cold tag to Garner. Garner gets his fat keester batted around for a bit, then is the recipient of an authoritative snap suplex from Loverboy Dennis. Then South tags back in only to get slapped around like Andrei Codrescu working a book signing at a hardshell Baptist church. This goes on for some time, with Garner eventually jobbing to a missile dropkick from the once-great Eaton.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS vs. BILL MULKEY/BILL TABB:

Bill without Randy was like Cornflakes without the milk. Mulkey is not working the bleachjob in this match. Tabb moves like JYD without the agility. Disappointing squash, given that a Mulkey was involved.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS vs. an unnamed jobber/GEORGE SOUTH:

This was from an episode of Worldwide, so there's a reasonably hot crowd. Here the ME's have the tag belts. We all know what South can do, and the match starts off with him getting an arm drag and a dropkick and a flying headscissors in, which built his credibility even though he was obviously the match's designated heat magnet, going Face In Peril pretty quickly. Midnights with quick tags and doubleteams, as you'd expect, and they go over pretty quickly(Eaton, frog splash) . This match was pretty mailed in, an obvious attempt at giving the rubes a little something to heat up the crowd for a TV taping in Mouth Cancer, NC or some such. Nice powerslam from Condrey a highlight of this one.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS vs. NELSON ROYAL/TODD CHAMPION:

This didn't quite work for me. Nelson really looked horrible, kicking and punching his way into my heart (besmirching the legacy of the NWA Jr Heavyweight belt that he'd held some time before), while Champion sort of worked that Cole Twins magic, punching like Sally Struthers and bumping like Mary Tyler Moore during the series finale of her 70s sitcom (Ted Baxter whacked her but good with a kendo stick). Nelson should've retired before TV was colorized and Todd's only contribution to the annals of professional wrestling history was jobbing clean to Ric Flair in 1986 in Cirrhosis, South Carolina. Todd put the Man over. But, um, he kept his heat....

%%%%%%%%% NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE- Midnight Express vs Original Midnight Express- STARRCADE 1988- (DEAN RASMUSSEN):

I appear on a fabulous public access TV wrestling show called Wrestling Power 2000 with Tim Noel and Punisher Tommy Rose. Tommy- an all-around good guy and boisterous goofball- was late 80's NWA enhancement talent and eternal Virginia indie worker after that, and he was

trained by none other than Randy Rose! So when the call was made for the MX to be wrestler of the week, I was all about getting the Condrey/Rose version 2B mine, so here it is. This is the big blowoff of the big Midnights vs Original Midnights angle which led to the hideous feud between Condrey and Rose which led to both falling off the face of the earth. As I watched this match, it reminded me of when I watched this era in real time. I would go through year to year a half periods of time when I would give my liver a break and quit drinking for a while. It made me feel healthier, helped me focus on being in my band at the time (Richmond Rock pioneers- Flannel) and kept together my stormy relationship with my equally neurotic/psychotic as myself girlfriend. The other by-product of my forays into sobriety is that my addiction to pro wrestling gets a LOT bigger (the final time I quit (accept for a couple of journeys into sweet sweet booze) was a year before my first daughter was born. 675 wrestling tapes later....) I was kinda into wrestling as residual affects of as lifetime of viewing, but the women and whiskey wouldn't let me really get into it like I could have. The first time I ever quit was after a major extended bout of drunken basic mid-80s college bacchanalia from 1985 to mid-1987, I almost drank myself to death after playing a show at the infamous Jade Elephant in Richmond- where an open bartab allowed me to drink four pitchers of budweiser that I chased with a legendary stunt of total stupidity of doing 5 three ounce shots of tequila in thirty seconds. After waking up face down in my fireplace and being regaled about drunken asshole behaviour which was becoming a norm, I hopped on the wagon for a few months. after falling off the wagon and getting deeply into a relationship with the aforementioned neuro/psychotic fellow-travelling girlfriend after my prior girlfriend had moved back to California, I opted to jump on the wagon again- pretty much for kicks- and quickly became a caffiene addict- which made my new band (Flannel) the fastest pop band in the world. The other by-product was that I was talking to a guy that I worked with and told him that I was on the wagon and he then confided to me that he was an actual recovered alcoholic and so we started talking about stuff. He was from Carolina and mentioned going to high school with Wahoo McDaniel's daughter and then we both realized that we both had a history of wrestling fandom between the two of us, so we and few of my other friends started REALLY getting into wrestling- he would tape all of it and we would gather at his house on Mondays and watch it: all of it NWA and all of it like this. NWA kicked WWFs ass back then because this had no pretentions of production quality or mainstream acceptibility or being on Carson or trying to branch out into the Entertainment Field or any of that other bullshit a real wrestling fan could give a fuck about. This was about Southern style ass-stomping with NO cross-over value or market share possibility or anything. This match is all about that feeling- a beautifully barbaric feeling of knowing that REAL wrestling existed outside the realm of Hulkamania and the Honkey Tonk Man (one day I will tell y'all the story of the day that I almost beat the shit out of a yuppie at a party because he was talking about how great the WWF was- because it was so funny with all their zany characters and that NWA was that cheap looking crap. I can't remember why I allowed him to live.) The greatest part about this match is Dennis Condrey. What a great lost 80s Southern Ass-kicker. He is SUCH the guy coming off the backhoe to beat the hell out of the subcontractor head foreman. Rose isn't totally smoked in this, thus sparing him the "poor-man's Doug Sommers" jokes that I had lined up for him if he sucked more than I remembered. Actually, if he would have bumped bigger, I would have said that he deserved a foray into the big time, but he comes up a little short- but it IS Bobby Eaton in 19frickin88 so ANY and EVERYBODY gets carried by the Beautiful One. Stan Lanes kicks are

really lame in retrospect and Condrey was twice the ass-kicker. Face facts, Bobby Eaton was a great worker that would make any combination the best tagteam in the US. the fact that the Eaton team was wrestling face, makes this less than the best of possible worlds because the coolness of the MX was the fact that they re-invented the heel role by being heels with a vast array of offense, THUS when Ricky Morton would be beaten to death and Robert Gibson led the claps at ringside, the MX were doing the coolest shit in the world in the ring to the hapless, hot-tagging victim. In this match, Bobby is the victim and what you get is Condrey doing the CWA Version of the Arn Andersen Heel Ass-Stomp, so it's a very non-usual MX match dynamic. Condrey and Rose are pretty masterful at pumping the last ounce of heat into the whole HEAT SEGMENT! and it's pretty textbook how they work to the WAAAAAY screwy finish. In the end, Randy Rose was deeply a cog in the Southern wrestling style and I like the effort he showed here to not get totally smoked by the super-worker and two good workers. In the end, Condrey is the one I wonder about- the rest of his story and what he looked like in the ring other than in the masterful match against Terry Taylor from Alabama that I saw. Either way, here it is- another perfect example of 1980's Southern-style Tag Wrestling- the style that allowed undersized real workers to work in the US long before ECW was ever imagined and long before the WCW created and destroyed their Cruiserweight Division. It's all really important when thinking of all of it's effect on any wrestling in the US worth watching in this day and age.

YOUR THEME AGAIN THIS WEEK! INTERPROMOTIONAL MAYHEM

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! NEW JAPAN vs UFO- Kazumi Murakami/Nagoya Ogawa vs. Shinya Hashimoto/Takashi Iizuka- (PHIL SCHNEIDER) :

This was part of the big UFO v. New Japan feud, which was sort of manufactured by Inoki. UFO was his shoot style federation that actually ran a couple a shows , but was mainly used to get Ogawa over and provide a faction for NJ to oppose. It worked because the crowd was absolutely losing their shit. They made this match because Iizuka was doing some asskicking in the brawl after the Hashimoto v. Ogawa dome show quasi-shoot. Iizuka and Murakami start out and just blister each other with kicks and punches, Murakami briefly got mount, but Iizuka is able to get to the ropes, where Murakami just pastes him with a kick, swelling up the side of his face and knocking him out. Murakami gets on the mike and starts screaming, and the New Japan crew rush the ring, and brawl with Ogawa and Murakami (with Yasuda whomping ass as usual), with Fujinami and Inoki coming in wearing suits, to calm things down. They restart the match and they have a UWFI style tag match, full of really stiff realistic work, the end is great as Ogawa and Hashimoto are brawling on the floor and Iizuka slaps on a nasty choke sleeper to KO Murakami, both sides have to be seperated at the end as they talk shit and shove each other. I am not sure how much the interpromotional aspect added to atmosphere of the match, but the Ogawa v. Hashimoto feud is so hot that the UFO v. NJ aspect is sort of overshadowed. Murakami looked the best in this match, and Iizuka also looked great, their singles match should be the biscuits.

*****WCW vs. New Japan- Eddy Guerrero vs. Shinjiro Ohtani - WCW Starrcade '95 - (PHIL RIPPA):

The Concept: You can look at it in one of two ways, WCW wanted to try something different or WCW needed to fill up time on the PPV. Either way, they came up with the idea of the Sonny Ono leading the New Japan troops into WCW for a best of seven series with the winner taking home the prestigious World Cup of Wrestling. I was going to review all seven matches but I couldn't get my hands on the PPV (actually, that should read, I couldn't get some nice person to send me the PPV). Other featured matches were Liger vs. Benoit and "shudder" Johnny B. Badd vs. Masa Saito. Anyway, this match was the fifth in the series with both teams being tied at two. The Mullets: You would think that Eddy would have the most freaked out mullet but on this night he is trumped by referee Randy Eller. Of course, there was some Nashville rube in the front row who might have sported the True Second Coming of mullets but I couldn't tell because he never took off his hat. The Announcers: There is nothing more entertaining than listening to Dusty try and call the juniors. "He was a flyin' and a kickin' and if he took his leg out he would be a stompin' and then he wouldn't be a flyin'." Tony actually calls some action and perhaps the most amazing thing of all, Bobby actually tries to corral everyone in and have them focus on the match. There is a great exchange between Dusty and Brian that went something like this:

Bobby: Let's give the people a different insight. Dusty, if you were Guerrero, what would you be thinking right now?
Dusty: "I'd be thinking I lost alotta weight."

But then Dusty goes on a big diatribe about how Ohtani needs to drag Eddy "between the two W's, right on the Giant C" and go to the pay window. All in all, for once the three stooges didn't annoy me because the hype up the importance of the results of this match for both sides.

The Match: Short Version: Match of the Night. Match of the Year Candidate.

Long Version: At this point in time, it is arguable that Ohtani was one the top five wrestlers in the world. Eddy was in Super Happy Face mode but he could still wrestle circles, squares and rhombuses around most anyone. Ohtani has no problem picking up the dickish heel quotient though as he is, IIRC, the only New Japan member to draw the ire of the crowd on his own. These two were perfectly suited for this match and for once the WCW yahoos, er... booking committee got something right by putting this match at this juncture of the card. Guerrero and Ohtani work the match from the point that they know this is a must win match and therefore will do anything they have to to win. Which leads to things like Guerrero hitting both Splash Mountain and a junior Ohtani killer powerbomb. The Back and forth action is so good that it manages to draw the Nashville crowd in as the action unfolds - see for all you new wrestling fans, when you can get the dorks in the Hulkamania bandannas to start popping for your match, you are good. One of my favorite sequences is when Ohtani turns a Flair flip into a springboard dropkick and then follows it up with a springboard plancha. Later on, he hits one of the best looking springboard dropkicks that I have ever seen him do. The finish comes on a series of roll-ups where Ohtani comes out on top on the third one to get the win. The reaction from the crowd is great as they go from elation to depression in the span of two seconds. Match probably would have been 5 stars if the time constraints of the PPV hadn't shortened it.

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NEXT WEEK: DDT! BATTLARTS! TORYUMON! GAEA! A NEW THEME! More writing about lots and lots of wrestling! WHOMP ASS!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

seven fists in the face of wrestling

Fairly slow she'd moved in world wrestling spectacle

League surrender, weak gender, stage name

Shoulders bare mean nothing audience-wise

And they want that shoulder down

Royal gown, nylon inner-seam

Abrasive to the skin no real princess wears

I was unprepared, I didn't know the feeling

What it was there, all I was, in you, ringing true

- the Loud Family, "Rise of the Chokehold Princess"

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